

21 April 2014

Soldiers,

Let me introduce myself because I am quite sure most of you do not know who I am. That's okay, when I was at your rank I didn't know who the Army National Guard Command Sergeant Major was, either.

My name is CSM Brunk W. Conley, the 10th CSM of the Army National Guard. That is a big title, but what it really means is that I am the Senior NCO representing you and the entire ARNG. Believe me, I was once a PV1, PV2, PFC, SPC, and SGT just like you. My current rank and position mean only that I have been around a while and have a little more experience than I did in those earlier days.

In my 31 years, I have served on both Active Duty and as a part-time Guardsman. In my civilian occupation I taught high school chemistry and physics. I have served overseas in Iraq and Afghanistan, and stateside for Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. I've been a State Active Guard-Reserve (AGR) Soldier in Oregon, and am now serving on Title 10 Federal Active Duty as your ARNG CSM.

As I've gotten settled into my role as the new ARNG CSM, I've had the opportunity to talk with many Soldiers like you. You (PV1 to SGT) are the largest group in the Army National Guard – you are 67% of our force. You are the muscle of this organization. Nothing moves or gets done unless you do it. I thank my lucky stars that I was chosen to represent you and your battle buddies.

During my conversations, I've noticed some common themes. Education benefits are critically important. Student loan and tuition assistance is particularly critical for many of you. I've also heard concerns about mental health – many of you continue to believe a stigma against seeking help still exists. And perhaps most troubling, I've heard repeatedly from men and women who are troubled by the scourge of sexual assault in our ranks.

A big part of my job is to reach out to you and communicate with you about what I'm hearing and seeing here in Washington, D.C. about these and many other issues. I also have a duty to keep talking with you and to bring your concerns to the senior leaders. That's why I need you to take action in these four important areas:

1. I need you and your battle buddies to go to Facebook and "like" my page: [@www.facebook.com/CSMConley](https://www.facebook.com/CSMConley). I will be regularly posting items for you there, so get your friends on my page, as well. There will be great info posted for all to share.
2. Structured Self Development- Level 1. If you haven't enrolled or finished, I need all of you to enroll and get started/finish this SSD 1. If you don't know what SSD 1 is, then please talk to your team leader or squad leader.

3. Take care of each other. We have issues in the Guard with suicide, resiliency, and safety. We need every single one of you. Seek help, pay attention to each other and watch each other's backs. And keep the conversation about these issues alive with each other and with your leaders.
4. Make sure you use social media responsibly. Recently, we have suffered a few embarrassments from Soldiers posting inappropriate comments and pictures that do not represent our values. Overall, I don't believe the majority of these are posted with any desire to hurt the National Guard. However; that is the exact effect because the Soldier either didn't think it through completely or pressed "send" and then immediately regretted it. Remember, the internet is eternal – once something is sent out online it remains there forever. The delete button is not as powerful as it might seem!

So in closing, please do the four things I am asking of you. Help me communicate with you – the biggest, most important audience in the ARNG: PV1-SGT. You are the ones who make this great organization successful.

Thanks for all you do! You are truly great Americans. I look forward to hearing from you and reading your comments.

CSM Brunk W. Conley
10th CSM of the
Army National Guard